

**TEC Communications Topic Group  
Winter Meeting, February 6, 2001  
Portland, Oregon**

**Participants:** Patricia Armijo, NTP-A; Nancy Bennett, ATR/UNM; Debby Cohen, National Safety Council; Martha Crosland, DOE EM-11; Sam Dixon, Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Westminster, Colorado; Audrey Eidelman, ECA; Ray English, DOE NR; Beth Farrell Hale, SAIC; Elizabeth Helvey, JK Research Associates; Ken Niles, State of Oregon; Brian O'Connell, NARUC; Phil Paull, CSG/ERC; Wilda Portner, SAIC; Jill Reilley, SAIC; Lisa Sattler, CSG/MW; Paul Seidler, Robison/Seidler

We discussed the presentation for the Local Government Network, the Guide to Low-Level Waste, and routing, risk communication and EIS Qs and As databases and bibliographies. Input was sought on how to use our Transportation Communication Products that were created by the group over the past year. The products are: Key Message Statements on Transportation, Risk Communication Annotated Bibliography, Routing Annotated Bibliography, EIS Comment and Response Project, Sample Approach to Explaining Communication Risk, and Best Practices for the U.S. Department of Energy's Radioactive Materials Transportation Public Information Programs. Adding the Local Government Network Presentation and the Guide to Low-Level Waste to the suite of risk communication information products was also suggested.

**Action Items:**

**Responsible Party**

**Action to be taken (Deadline)**

L. Sattler

Submit draft Best Practices for the U.S. Department of Energy's Radioactive Materials Transportation Public Information Programs to B. Hale for distribution to Topic Group (February 19, 2001)

All

Provide comments to W. Portner on draft Guide to Low-Level Waste (February 28, 2001) (Note: the deadline has subsequently been extended until March 14, 2001.)

P. Armijo, B. Hale

Submit draft Transportation Communication Products implementation plan to Topic Group for review (March 9, 2001)

All

Provide comments to W. Portner on draft Local Government Network Presentation (March 23, 2001)

All

Participate in conference call to provide input on draft implementation plan (March 2001)

P. Armijo/All

Present Transportation Communication Products, implementation plan, and fact sheets to entire TEC organization at July meeting (July 2001)

**Summary:**

Patricia Armijo and Martha Crosland welcomed the group, provided an overview of the Topic Group's recent activities, and described the afternoon's brainstorming session on the Transportation Communication Products implementation plan.

Wilda Portner gave an update on the draft Local Government Network presentation, which has been loaded onto the TEC website (<http://twilight.saic.com/newtec>). It includes over 40 slides on DOE transportation of non-weapons related radiological materials. A comment form for use by Communications Topic Group

members was sent under separate cover. Comments on the draft presentation are due to Ms. Portner by March 23, 2001. The presentation was put together as a result of a need expressed by members of the Energy Communities Alliance to assist elected officials in providing information to constituents and answering their questions on DOE transportation. Lisa Sattler asked for an example of the types of comments received on the presentation to date. Ms. Portner said some commenters said there was too much irrelevant information and that the presentation needed specific information on the percentage of DOE shipments relative to all annual radioactive materials shipments.

The draft National Safety Council Guide to Low-Level Waste was distributed to the Communications Topic Group for review in early January. By way of background, Ms. Crosland explained that the Guide, which has been under development for about a year, has been through several review cycles and that the National Safety Council is looking forward to TEC Communications Topic Group comments. The National Safety Council is also in the process of updating WIPP information products. Ms. Crosland asked TEC members to let her know if any other information products are needed. There is a possibility that a booklet on DOE emergency preparedness efforts may be forthcoming from the Council.

Phil Paull asked for whom the Guide to Low-Level Waste was intended. Ms. Crosland replied that it will be mainly for the media to use because they are the primary conduit to the public. Mr. Paull said he that he asked the question because he believes it commendable to develop documents for information purposes but asked if the Guide was developed because existing information was lacking. He further clarified his question by asking if the new Guide had anything to do with the future potential for more low-level waste transportation over highways. Ms. Crosland answered that it took longer than anticipated to develop the booklet and DOE originally had wanted to have the document out with the issuance of the recent environmental impact statement records of decision.

Other comments on the Guide received during the meeting included: the Guide downplayed the amount of waste that will be coming to Nevada and Hanford, and how issuance of the document fits into the phase out of the DOE Low-Level Waste Office. Ms. Crosland said the focus on the Guide was DOE Environmental Management low-level waste but commercial waste was included to provide a complete picture. In addition, Ken Niles commented that the Guide shouldn't be considered final until environmental documentation is completed concerning amount of waste, where it is going, numbers of shipments, etc. Ms. Crosland said an acknowledgement of this would be important to add.

Comments need to be sent to Ms. Portner by February 28, 2001. Ms. Portner will compile the comments and submit to DOE.

Nancy Bennett reported on ATR's research efforts that include annotated bibliographies and searchable databases. Annotated Risk Communication and Routing bibliographies are available on ATR's website: [www.trex-center.org](http://www.trex-center.org). The purpose of the bibliographies is to summarize all relevant documents, commentaries, policies, and law on the issue of DOE shipment routing, and to provide a "one-stop shop" for information on Risk Communication. The routing issues bibliography grew out of the EIS Comment/Response database project after it was discovered that the number one comment received from DOE stakeholders during environmental impact statement processes was about routing.

The EIS Comment/Response database project now has about 1,000 entries. DOE's responses to similar questions during an environmental impact statement process have been fairly consistent but the information is useful because it helps identify situations in which answers to questions could be improved. A comment was made to create a two-tier system for search on the comment/response database

In addition, a specific routing database will be available on the web shortly. Ms. Bennett also said within the next month the databases will have more search capabilities. Mr. Paull wanted clarification on how “searchable” the databases were and Ms. Bennett said they could be searched by author name, keyword, etc.

Mr. Niles asked what kind of activity the T-REX website was getting. Ms. Bennett replied that it has had over 9,000 hits in a month with a monthly average of 5,000 hits. The news pages are used frequently, especially radioactive materials transportation news. The DOE Answers to Your Questions Transportation Brochure gets printed out frequently and the recently added page in Spanish is becoming more popular. A list serve capability will be available beginning February 14, 2001, on the T-REX site.

The remainder of the meeting was used to gather input from Topic Group members concerning ways to best ensure internal and external audiences are aware of and use the Transportation Communication Products once they are finalized. A draft implementation plan will be sent to the group for review in mid-March, followed by a Topic Group conference call at the end of the month. The work of the group (i.e., risk communication products) will be presented at the July general membership TEC meeting. Finally, the group expressed a desire to go on hiatus until a further need arises for the group to reconvene.